

U.S. Invasion of Cambodia

Republic of China. How there could be a meaningful discussion in these circumstances is hard to understand. I personally regard this approach as a very unlikely avenue. The reluctance of the Secretary General to become involved suggests that this is not the best approach to take.

There has been a proposal that the International Control Supervisory Commission should be re-established. This suggestion was made by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Stanfield) who urged us to take a positive attitude toward this organization. I think it would be helpful if before making further speeches on this point his speechwriters and advisers were to read the terms of reference setting up this commission. If they did, they would find that the commission was set up to "control". The word "control" in French, the language of the original text, has a meaning which differs from the meaning of the word "control" in English; perhaps the best word in English would be "supervise" or "oversee".

If the hon. gentleman's advisers would examine this document they would find that the commission is entirely dependent on the good will of the country in which it is operating. If the Cambodian government really desired the commission to operate effectively, and if there were co-operation from Poland in this regard, it is conceivable that the commission could report violations of the Geneva accord or of other accords which might be reached in the future.

However, if the government of Cambodia does not really want this commission to function—and in the past this has been its attitude—there is no earthly hope of it being successful. These are harsh words, but they are realistic. What can three men sitting in Phnom Penh, 300 miles from where the action is, do to observe and report on the violations of the Geneva agreement? They could do no more than three men sitting out in the wilds of Ontario could do to analyse and report on such a thing as a Quebec election. Unless they are allowed to carry out their investigations on the spot, interrogate witnesses and so on, there is no likelihood of their being effective.

Mr. Stanfield: Mr. Speaker, would the hon. member not agree that my suggestion was that the government should inquire whether the new government in Cambodia would take a different attitude toward this commission?

Mr. Anderson: In that regard I accept the correction of the hon. gentleman. I agree with him on this point. This must be examined.

There is no magic attached to the ICC. The hon. gentleman does realize this, I think. My comments were directed more to his advisers than to himself. Perhaps those who wrote his speech had overlooked the limitations built into the Commission. But if there is a chance of co-operation, this might be a useful vehicle and I am sure the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Sharp) is not ruling it out.

The most useful possibility which has been mentioned is the reconvening of the Geneva Conference. I realize this is unlikely to occur. The Soviet Union, one of the co-chairmen, is very doubtful about such a move. I suspect from what the Secretary of State for External Affairs has told us that in recent weeks the nations making up that conference have been canvassed, and that in future they will be continually asked whether their attitude to reconvening the conference has become more favourable. So if it should appear as though a new conference might succeed, one could be reconvened.

This is a difficult subject. It would be easy to wax angry, as did the eloquent member for York South, or to speak in broad terms referring back to dates as long ago as 1914 as the right hon. member for Prince Albert has done. But in situations of this kind I believe we should avoid actions taken merely for the sake of appearing to be active in the eyes of the Canadian people.

This international event in Indo-China might to a certain degree be limited if nations such as ours did not try to involve other nations in this exercise. One reason international events or border activities escalate is because too many nations leap into too many conferences and make statements based on their own experience rather than that of the area involved. It is with great sadness that I suggest we must be careful not to escalate this problem simply out of a desire to show the Canadian people that we are sensitive and active on the Cambodian issue.

● (4:40 p.m.)

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Mr. Speaker, the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Sharp) and the hon. member for Esquimalt-Saanich (Mr. Anderson) have spent most of their time telling us about all the things that will not work, all the things we cannot do, and how completely futile it is to do anything at all about what is undoubtedly one of the most serious problems facing the world today. The Secretary of